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Amendments to the Claims:

A clean version of the entire set of pending claims (including amendments to the claims, if any) is submitted herewith per 37 CFR 1.121(c)(3). This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A processing apparatus ~~conceived~~ for processing data, based on control signals generated from a set of instructions being executed in parallel, comprising:

a plurality of issue slots, wherein each issue slot comprises a plurality of functional units, the plurality of issue slots being controlled by a set of control words, corresponding to the set of instructions,

~~characterized in that~~wherein the processing apparatus further comprises a dedicated issue slot arranged for loading an immediate value in dependence upon a dedicated instruction comprising the immediate value.

2. (Original) An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the dedicated issue slot comprises a single functional unit arranged for only executing the dedicated instruction.

3. (Original) An apparatus according to Claim 1, further comprising a dedicated register file for storing said immediate value, the dedicated register file being accessible by the dedicated issue slot.

4. (Original) An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said processing apparatus is a VLIW processor and wherein said set of instructions is grouped in a VLIW instruction.

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5. (Original) An apparatus according to Claim 4, wherein the VLIW instruction is a compressed VLIW instruction, comprising dedicated bits for encoding NOP operations.

6. (Original) An apparatus according to Claim 1, further comprising a register file associated with the plurality of issue slots.

7. (Original) An apparatus according to Claim 6, further comprising a connection network for coupling the plurality of issue slots and the register file.

8. (Currently Amended) A method for processing data, said method comprising ~~the following steps~~:

storing input data in a register file;

processing data retrieved from the register file based on control signals generated from a set of instructions being executed in parallel, using a plurality of issue slots controlled by a set of control words being generated from the set of instructions; and wherein each issue slot comprises a plurality of functional units;[[,]] and

~~characterized in that the method further comprises a step of~~ loading an immediate value into a dedicated issue slot in dependence upon a dedicated instruction comprising the immediate value.

9. (Currently Amended) ~~Instruction~~ An instruction set, comprising a plurality of instructions for execution by a processing apparatus ~~according to the preamble of Claim 1~~ for processing data based on control signals generated from a set of instructions being executed in parallel, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the instruction set further comprises a dedicated instruction having an immediate value, which dedicated instruction when executed by a dedicated issue slot causes the dedicated issue slot to load the immediate value.

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10-12. (Canceled)

13. (New) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the dedicated issue slot is controlled to load the immediate value by a control word consisting of the immediate value.

14. (New) The apparatus of claim 3, wherein the dedicated issue slot comprises a single functional unit arranged for only executing the dedicated instruction, and wherein the dedicated register file can be written to only by the single functional unit of the dedicated issue slot.

15. (New) The apparatus of claim 14, wherein the single functional unit of the dedicated issue slot can only write to the dedicated register file.

16. (New) The method of claim 8, wherein the dedicated issue slot is controlled to load the immediate value by a control word consisting of the immediate value.

17. (New) The method of claim 8, further comprising executing the dedicated instruction with a single functional unit of the dedicated issue slot.